The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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The Great Democracies Clasp Hands

THE COMMONWEAL is unable to express the delirious surprise registered by some of our contemporaries over the coming together of Germany and Russia. We fear the surprise is an admission of previous skepticism, for the rapprochement had been widely hinted at and predicted and even (e.g. Krivitsky) said to be in formation. Spiritual affinity remains an active element in history, as is also, we fear, *Realpolitik.* The most important immediate question is how will the new pacts affect the issue of peace and war. We don't know for sure, although readers may by the time they see this. If war comes, the pacts aid Germany, and one can feel confident that they will further injure the status of justice in the world: individually Russia and Germany were pretty appalling; combined they could really show us something.

Three Cheers For the Red And Brown

We hope this charming new entents will end a lot of wretchedly dishonest and fantastically absurd talk about "isms" and "ideologies." The Fascists who have been hypocritically mouthing about saving the world from Bolshevism ought finally to be branded with a brand that any child can see. Fighting Communism with sword and truncheon has been far too universally simply a dirty cover over a lust to rule and exploit. And all the unbearably self-righteous twaddle of the intellectuals about the Socialist Democracy being the great defense against Fascism and Dictatorship should fall pretty flat as the two systems undisguisedly blend together. It is almost getting to the point where it appears that the only way to fight for decency is to try as hard as possible to be decent. But our proud and hard-headed faith in power politics and power economics and in imperialisms of all material and mental and spiritual kinds will no doubt preserve us from falling quite to that level.

The Liberal "400" Hail the USSR

THE *New Republic* dated August 23, which was also, it will be remembered, the day after the Messrs. Hitler and Stalin told the world how things were going, The Bulwark of Democracy and Peace carried an editorial welcome ("the general tendency of the document is the right one . . .") to an open letter addressed "to all active supporters of democracy and peace" signed by more than 400 professors, social scientists, scientists, writers and artists and speakers of various degrees of notoriety, all of whom must be blushing now. The letter carries on the Stalinist and Stalinist-sympathizer support of the Soviet Union as the great defense of democracy and peace, and the Communist attack on the "Committee for Cultural Freedom" (commented upon here June 9) and the "League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism" and all "reactionaries" who don't love the Russian system. It appears that "the reactionaries . . . have encouraged the fantastic falsehood that the USSR and the totalitarian states are basically alike." Ironic, if they were not too silly to be ironic, are the statements: "The Soviet Union continues as always to be a consistent bulwark against war and aggression. . . . On the international scene the Fascists and their friends have tried to prevent a united anti-aggression front. . . ." The Fascists and their friends the Russians have been pretty successful, one might say.

Besides the either naive or malicious attempts of this intellectualist "400" to deny the tyrannical and deadly character of Russian government and culture, they make maddening assumptions: "One of the gravest problems confronting all those engaged in the struggle for democracy and peace, whether they be liberals, progressives, trade unionists or others, is how to unite their various forces so as to achieve victory for their common

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goal." Common goal! The false and twisted conceptions Communists have of peace and democracy do not constitute a tolerable, far less a desirable goal; and the actual end of Communist thought, word and deed is *nobody's* idea of democracy and peace—it is closer the conceptions of Stalin's allies, the Nazis of Germany. Someone should tell "the 400" that the Popular Front is dead and was a crippling fraud while it existed.

More Experiments in Group Medicine

Learning By Trial And Error

THE LAUNCHING of medical service plans for groups of voluntary subscribers is no longer rare. Many such plans are functioning now throughout the country, and there is a promising venture currently beginning in Los Angeles and another set for the fall in New Jersey. But one feels a fresh pleasure in saluting each of these valiant experiments, which are surely initiating the medical tradition of the future. No realist believes of course that they will solve at once, or even perhaps solve completely, the various problems inherent in medical service as such. The average member assessments which will safely cover the necessary medical undertakings of a given group for a given time are still a matter of guess work; they will not attain to actuarial exactitude without a good deal more trial and error. Then there is the alleged danger that the salary plan will transform some physicians into routine "clock-punchers" instead of viligant guardians of health and life. Finally, there is the fact that medicine is a field in which the personal factor may be the vital determinant; and that every check upon the free relationship of patient and physicians narrows the potential play of that factor.

But critics of the voluntary group system too often talk as if these objections were found only in that system; whereas the truth is that—except for a small and favored class—they are found everywhere today. In particular, it is because thousands of doctors are unpaid or badly paid, and millions go uncared for, or badly cared for, that the movement for group medicine has made such headway. Nor are the other problems unknown. The lazy or uninspired physician, though in a minority, has always been with us; if he continues to survive the rigid selectivity of the medical schools, it will be for the same reasons as have operated in the past, not because of the introduction of group medicine. Lastly, as to the free selection of physician by patients: do those in clinics freely select their physicians now? Or those in small towns? or those of small means in large cities? The associations now breaking ground in group medicine accept the principle of free selection and try to offer it within the limits of their service personnel. This is undoubtedly another point at which trial and error must do some necessary work. Meanwhile it is a heartening thing to see these fine beginnings made.

White Collar Workers Start to Organize

Superior or Company Complex?

AVERSION to manual labor undoubtedly has roots reaching back across the centuries; it is hard to say whether laziness or love of luxury is more responsible. In more recent times the tradition of the English gentleman has had a lot to do with this prejudice in our American white collar workers. The reborn love of the soil and popular acclaim for aviation and other scientific achievements that involve grime and overalls tend to diminish this effeteness. *Business Week* advances superiority-consciousness as the chief reason that only 7 percent of the nation's white collar workers are members of labor unions. But an even weightier reason would be the chances for advancement — mathematically miscroscopic for each individual —that exist in office and store. Many a man who could provide for himself and his family more abundantly in the less genteel surroundings of farm and factory continues the dull round of statistical mazes hoping for the "break" that will land him that much nearer to a private office with his name on the door. In fact it is where the employees have felt their interests farthest removed from those of the boss that organization has been most successful—retail clerks, telegraphers, teachers and newspaper workers. The unorganized 93 percent owe it to themselves, their families and their fellow-workers to form unions. And the company-conscious can do much to make their organizations good instruments for harmonious but effective dealing with the boss.

Shut-Down by Oil Producers

Competition from Illinois

ACTION by the refiners has brought about suspension by six southwestern states of 71 percent of our national oil production during the last two weeks in August. Extension of the shutdown for an additional 15 days is threatened. The failure of the Sinclair interests to maintain the rise in price for refined products led to their efforts to cut the crude oil price. This in turn brought action by state commissions, which used the powers granted them to conserve natural resources to shut off production in the interests of the crude oil price. It is said that the producers in Illinois, who are better situated geographically and not restricted by state conservation laws, are the chief cause of the oversupply and reduced prices. New in the field, they have seriously cut into midwestern and eastern markets once the domain of their distant com-

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petitors. Much pressure will be exerted to have them enter into some quota agreement with their fellow-producers. Producing agreements require careful regulation to safeguard the consumers. Authorities might well consider a limitation on gasoline taxes securing the refiners an equitable spread between cost and selling price without making the consumer pay through the nose any more than he is now. One thing is certain, utilization of a natural resource as important as oil should be governed by regulations that benefit the people as a whole. It is no commodity for inordinate private profit.

Power and Light Set Record

Summer Sparks

TIME WAS when public utilities like many other businesses found long summer days a period of slack demand. This is no longer true, despite the prevalence of daylight saving. The press reports every indication that the week of August 19 set an all-time record for power and light consumption in the United States. This is all the more remarkable in view of the shut-down of oil wells in six important states referred to elsewhere in these pages. Unhappily for sun-tan and outdoor sports enthusiasts the days are shortening markedly just now. More than ever swimming is better in the mornings. The unrelenting heat wave means day and night electric fans, air conditioning speed-ups and accelerated refrigeration—all grist for our electric current purveyors. Stable demand in a major industry like this one is all to the good. And it points to the fact that willy-nilly we are all becoming less self-reliant, more completely dependent on the steady flow of that mysterious "fluid."

Protecting Screen Juveniles

A Suggestion

PRESS STORIES about the normal and happy lives lived by young motion picture stars impress the thoughtful reader as somewhat less than convincing. The strain of film acting has derailed the normality of more than one adult; that it can be so minimized as to be harmless to babies and youths is very doubtful, especially in view of the Hollywood system, which capitalizes each personal vogue so relentlessly. Hence the news that the State Labor Commissioner will assume a more direct control of the minors in pictures, and will require evidence on health and school work before OK'ing any juvenile production seems to be good news. It does not necessarily reflect on all the parents and guardians and studios involved; and reflection on some of them is unfortunately only too well justified. And while the Labor Commissioner is about it, we suggest that he check up more carefully on the publicity, especially the photographs, featuring these more or less helpless young people. It is frequently in poor taste; and a recent batch of snapshots was something worse than that: two popular boys kissing a well-liked young girl said to have just turned "sweet sixteen"—all three in bathing suits, of course. The youngsters themselves would never have posed for these pictures. It was left to their publicity departments, presumably with the consent of their parents, thus perversely to exploit their carefully built up appeal of youth and innocence. The Labor Commissioner might spend a half-hour some time with the press bureaus of Hollywood.

Gardeners Hold a Convention

Art and Politics

AN INCREASING interest in gardens, flowers and trees is perhaps a sign that America is maturing. At least the most mature civilizations in the world, the oriental, are noted for their attention to those matters, and older countries in Europe make more of them than we. It may be some years before flower arrangement is considered here as one of the fine arts, of an equality to painting and sculpture and poety and music, as it is in Japan, but nevertheless, the trend to gardens is unmistakable, and encouraging. Gardening develops knowledge of the land and of growing, and interest in conservation and land usage. This besides a cultured and artistic sense and health, physical and psychological. To be thoroughly beneficial, gardening must not become a private or snobbish cult. The secret garden ought not to be the ideal, for however intimate the art or sport of gardening is, like other sports and arts it has social significance. The National Association of Gardeners, with its 2,000 expert members, is very important in this developing element of our culture. The Gardeners just held their twenty-ninth convention in Buffalo, and, reflecting the times, it was the "most political convention" the members could recall. Ex-Governor Davey of Ohio, who is known also in connection with trees, bitterly attacked the New Deal and then flew to the wilds of Canada. Senator Mead of New York took his place and defended the New Deal as strongly as it had been attacked. Such debate shows that the gardeners are not living in ivory towers, but it perhaps does not offer just what one would hope to be the contribution of their profession. It was more encouraging to read of their interest in and contributions to horticultural education for young persons, of the small distinction made between professional and amateur status, of their trips through neighboring gardens and estates and their lawn parties, all very much like the tours of the Garden Club members. It was also encouraging that the convention was widely reported.

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New York Meeting

An eye-witness account of a recent "Christian Front" meeting—without any comments.

HANDBILLS DISTRIBUTED around Columbus Circle and other parts of New York bore the following message:

See
Two Hours of Professional Motion Pictures *With Sound* of Events Leading up to Today's Growth of Political Fever
Including
News Parade of the Year
Germany Invades Austria
War in China
Etc.
Also the Preview of the New Christian Motion Picture to be Released this Fall.
Including
Social Justice Agents in Action
Riot Shots of 42nd Street
Jehovahs Witness's Rally at
Madison Square Garden
W.M.C.A. Picket Line & Many Others
The Above Named Incidents Will Be Shown in this Moving Picture.
To Make Possible the Production of this Motion Picture, Your Attendance is of Vital Importance. Bring All Your Friends to See This Two Hour Motion Picture with Sound.
To be held at
Donovan's Hall
308 West 59th Street at Columbus Circle
On July 29th and 30th
Saturday Evening, at 7-9-11 o'clock
Sunday Evening, at 7-9-11 o'clock
Admission $.25
Sponsored by the
"Social Justice Distributors Club"

At 6.55 Donovan's Hall, a dirty, ill-lighted, badly ventilated adjunct to Donovan's Bar and Grill, is filled to capacity with about two hundred perspiring men and women. Most are adults, though there are boys and girls from about twelve upward. Most are Irish, though there are a good number of Germans, Italians and others. A Transport Workers' dance is announced during the course of the meeting. Most are poor, or at richest from the lower middle class. Most are members of the Christian Front or Christian Mobilizers, as is revealed in the course of the evening.

In the center aisle is a portable movie projector. A Mr. O'Connor, a thin pale youth, acts as master of ceremonies and speaks through a microphone. He explains the purpose of the meeting—to enlist support for a "Christian" film which will reveal to the country what is happening in New York. "It will show things no Hollywood film will show. You know why. Oi yoi yoi." (Laughter and applause with shouts, "Down with the Jews," etc.)

The show begins with interrupted shots from a Hollywood Western—they seem to be from "The Plainsman." This is intended to portray what America was like in the good old days. There is much shooting and "Injun" killing. Mr. O'Connor breaks in frequently to point out various lessons.

Next there is a series of shots of "Social Justice Agents in Action." We see them hawking their wares—*Social Justice,* along with the *Brooklyn Tablet* in many instances. Their defiance of the police under certain circumstances is noted and praised by the commentator (despite the fact that there are at least ten policemen under a sergeant in the hall and a dozen more under a lieutenant on the sidewalk outside). There are shots of rival vendors selling *Equality* and the *Daily Worker.* "Take a look at the beak on the guy selling *Equality.* Oi yoi yoi," is Mr. O'Connor's comment. (Laughter from the audience and "Down with the kikes," etc.) A short skirmish of Christian Frontists with the police is shown with the explanation that three other such shots have been omitted at the request of the police department. The boast is made, however, that the "Christian" film being planned would include them. Some Christian Mobilizers and Frontists are pictured giving the Fascist salute at a demonstration. Mr. O'Connor says—and willy-nilly there is a bit of an apology in his voice—"Sure, why not? And when we come to power there are plenty who better look out." A rally of Christian Frontists in the Bronx is next flashed on the screen. The principal speaker there apparently was one Mr. McWilliams, who is pictured violently haranguing the audience. Mr. O'Connor, our commentator, laments the absence of sound pictures which would reveal the true "Adolph" McWilliams, "going to town." Next there is a picture of Johnny Geiss, "a Christian Frontist who spent a week-end in the Tombs prison for want of five hundred dollars bail" after a melée with the police. The audience is asked to "give a hand" to Mr. Geiss.

Then there is an intermission during which the crowd is addressed by Mr. Agioff, foreman of a crew of *Social Justice* vendors, and Mr. Westphal, leader of the "Christian" Mobilizers, who urge support for the film in project. Young girls pass beer containers around rather half-heartedly and small coins are gathered up. One man is seen stuffing a bill in. While Mr. Westphal is speaking someone calls out that there is a person in the hall taking notes. Mr. Westphal in a rage says it is "a stooge of Stinkweed in City Hall" (Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia). The crowd becomes restive. There are cries of "Throw him out," "Put out the lights. We'll fix him." The police sergeant looks worried and walks up the middle aisle. Mr. O'Connor takes the mike and appeals for order. He explains that the license for the meetings will be revoked if there is any disturbance. He consoles the audience with the thought that "Stinkweed" is on the way out of City Hall and asks them to pay no attention to the "stooge."

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The next speaker, Mr. Gilpatrick, is introduced as a student for the priesthood. He wears a two-inch crucifix pinned to his lapel. In accents manifestly imitating Father Coughlin's radio manner, Mr. Gilpatrick announces a "Christian" parade from Columbus Circle to Union Square for August 19. "It will be the greatest Christian demonstration ever seen in America." He proclaims that he will seek a permit from the authorities, but if one is not forthcoming he will march anyway. "As a proof of my sincerity, I am willing to lay down my life for this cause." All present are urged to join in the parade.*

The intermission over, there is shown a hodge-podge succession of news-reels from the past few years—the distributor is Castle Films. The highlight will be, according to Mr. O'Connor, "the taking of Austria. Then we will see how much the Austrians really wanted it." Major political events are mixed up in crazy fashion with flood and storm disasters. The sentiment of the audience is manifested by its cheers and boos. Loudest applause goes to Adolph Hitler. Father Coughlin barely equals him. Next comes Mussolini and the Emperor of Japan. President Roosevelt is roundly booed, as is Cardinal Mundelein giving the Papal Blessing at the New Orleans Eucharistic Congress. The King and Queen of England are booed amidst cries of "Pay your debts," yet a moment later German soldiers are cheered as Mr. O'Connor calls them "the finest soldiers in the world." Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his wife are hissed, but Admiral Yarnell is cheered when shown receiving a medal for service in Chinese waters. Secretary of State Hull is pictured and Mr. O'Connor appeals for silence so that the audience can "get a load of what he is saying." Mr. Hull states that America will never recognize the principle "that might makes right." Mr. O'Connor comments, "That's what you think!"

Finally, conventional shots of Hitler's entry into Austria are flashed and Mr. O'Connor offers this as proof that the Austrian people wanted *Anschluss*.

The news-reel over, the audience is dismissed and asked to file out quickly as there is a long queue awaiting the next performance.

Are Cooperatives the Answer?

Two authors discuss the matter—one, the limitations of cooperatives; the other, their applicability in the parish.

By **John Horton**

CONSUMER COOPERATIVES, you may have noticed lately, are being boosted in this country as one of the answers to our economic ills. Just now, the cooperative movement has a vogue very similar to that of dimly-remembered "technocracy," but I wonder whether such a promotional flare is not likely to do the movement more harm than good. As the teacher of a cooperative group recently formed in my town, I have been struck by the advantages of such enterprise, but I also am inclined to distrust the ebullient enthusiasm which sees in the movement an answer to all economic problems without a single difficulty or limitation. To me, the cooperative represents very much less than that and it requires more than a modicum of level-headedness among its proponents if it is to survive and prosper.

The cooperative, if it is to stand on its own feet in this country, must lay less stress on its alleged merits as a superior merchandising machine and concentrate on its benefits and powers as a consumer democracy. It is often said that the big advantage of the cooperative is that it can bring huge savings because it eliminates middle-men and the profits of private enterprise. Now at the risk of sacrilege there are many who are not so sure of that. Observations by at least one observer, Robin Hood of the President's Inquiry on Cooperative Enterprise made in 1936, were such that he felt no great advantages lay with the cooperative as a money-saving device in this country, and the general consensus of the commission on this matter was to agree with his findings.

There is one reason for such a belief and it is briefly that we, in the United States, are provided with distributing machinery which does a wonderfully efficient job of marketing. The best testimony to American methods is that the same commission found that cooperative societies in Europe

* The parade was called off on August 17 after widespread protest and after Mr. Gilpatrick had conferred with Father Coughlin, although the police had granted the permit and in fact took their stations in large numbers.

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were rapidly adopting them. So it is doubtful whether the cooperative can ever provide a much cheaper outlet for desired goods than the chain stores or the stream-lined private retailers. The cooperative enterprise, it is estimated, can market goods on the average of but 5 to 10 percent less than any progressive retailer, hardly an inducement in the face of fewer services provided and the increase of responsibility amongst members. The appeal of marketing efficiency must bring, it seems to many, inevitable disappointments.

Then again we cannot forget that the European cooperatives generally grew in an atmosphere of private inefficiency and high marketing costs. The cooperative provided the European member with the real attraction of cheaper prices and tended to promote a more efficient system. Incidentally, it is appropriate to note the alarm with which the cooperatives of Great Britain view the introduction and rapid growth of the chain system in that country. It seems that while cooperative membership is increasing, average purchases are 30 per cent lower than in 1913 and are stabilized at about $125 to $150 a year. British coop management has had to resort to many devices considered antithetical to Rochedale principles to maintain its position: the introduction of credit (British cooperators owed the societies 6,307,717 pounds in 1935) and the expansion of advertising are two important changes. The fact that private distributing agencies are learning American marketing methods is withdrawing attention from cooperative enterprise.

We may say that chain distribution should be legislated out of existence as a danger to the cooperative movement, but that is an exceedingly narrow view because the chain, or any private enterprise for that matter, has appeals and certain advantages which definitely attract some people in all classes. These appeals are often directly antithetical to the ideas of the cooperative when it is considered as a consumer democracy.

Broadly, the cooperative as a consumer democracy provides the opportunity for a group more effectively to guide its own economic destinies. That opportunity is not as easily realized as is commonly supposed for the inherent problems of economics as well as of democratic institutions are involved. Chiefly the problems cluster about the difficulties of educating members to an understanding of their destinies, coupled with the troubles involved in administration. To my mind, the whole answer centers in getting the members "cooperatively-minded," to borrow a widely-used term. The study club, the educational pamphlet and similar tools have been adopted by the European cooperatives and have been carried to their most effective end by St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. However, such an aim demands a tremendous effort from both the leader and the members of the cooperative study group. It is an intellectual and a Christian problem of the first order and extremely difficult in the day of the cult of selfishness.

Education for cooperation must take a higher level than that adopted by private business in general if the consumer-democracy idea is to succeed. The cooperative must center itself upon the idea of distribution for human needs if it is to have any reason for existence at all and best serve the interests of its members. Followed out logically such education will lead to action in a manner by which the cooperative will be able to compete with private industry successfully and will, what is more, lead to modification of the entire economic setup. Such a program may be demonstrated.

Finding man's real needs

Today, as a result of the frantic efforts for profit, we have built up a false economic structure based not upon human needs but rather upon what private industry can make its customers believe are human needs. This is not to condemn many of the benefits which industry has brought us; those are admitted, but along with the many conveniences have come a great many evils which eat up a large amount of the consumer's income. With advertising as the principal teacher of the system, the profiteer usually plays upon one's emotional buying motives — pride, ambition, emulation, vanity, etc. — to make the consumer believe that his particular product may have some special value. Now that may seem very trite, but a review of present conditions in marketing will give a clue to the entirely different approach that the cooperative must take.

The cooperative must ferret out the real needs of the human society and attempt the training of its members by consumer education to an appreciation of those needs. The distributing machinery of the cooperative may then perform the function of getting the goods to the consumer as efficiently as possible. Not only that but it is a common condition in Europe and this country that the private merchant attracts superior merchandisers through his willingness to pay higher salaries for services so that he may continue to market on the basis of the old standards and do it in a much superior manner. It seems imperative, then, that the cooperative establish itself on an entirely new foundation, a new merchandising idea, if it wishes to compete.

There is the problem of cooperative responsibility which has to be faced, too. Any democracy, whether political or economic, carries with it the essential element of individual responsibility. That has to be acquired by the members of the cooperative for it is not at all natural for men to be overly responsible. Now it seems rather doubtful that all men can be educated to economic

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democracy, at least in our generation. It is hard enough to educate men to political democracy without adding the complications of economic life which is even more inclusive. In England 90 percent of the members in cooperatives never take the trouble to vote and the general tendency seems to be in Europe that as the age of the society increases, there is less interest shown in democratic privileges. It seems, then, that we as cooperators must face the following difficulties revolving round human nature: 1. That some men have no desire to be democrats of any kind—political or economic—they can never be held by the cooperative in face of price competition. 2. That some men do not desire to share the responsibility naturally attendant with the cooperative, but would rather shift that responsibility to some other specialist, the private owner. 3. That there will always be the problem amongst members of lack of interest as expressed by a failure to exercise privileges.

The balance to be sought

Lack of interest will open up the cooperative to a number of evils which must be guarded against. A failure to exercise voting privileges will open the way for a group of bureaucrats to dominate the cooperative. There seems to be a decided tendency in that direction among the older societies in England and efforts are being made to combat bureaucracy in other European societies. Reports from European cooperatives show trends to bureaucratic control because lack of member interest and the increasing submergence of the member in the growing society enables employees' votes to dominate elections. Probably not typical but still indicative is a recent election of the London Cooperative Society, whose membership was 575,000 in 1935, at which less than 3,000 voted and of those 2,000 were employees.

On the other side is the problem of a belligerent minority which prevents administrators attempting any form of progressive action. American farm marketing cooperatives are often troubled with this evil.

In other words, the problem is one of stepping gingerly between two extremes. The cooperative must attempt to approach the swiftness of action practiced by dictatorships, either economic or political, while retaining democracy. To bring this about, Swedish cooperatives, especially Konsum of Stockholm, are experimenting with control through district representation. Under the plan, Stockholm is mapped into 18 districts in which an annual meeting is held to elect delegates to the general conferences and to make recommendations regarding policy.

Now all the above has the sound of discouragement in it, but that is not the intention. To me it seems highly desirable to recognize the limitations of the cooperative so that we may work more efficiently within the circumscribed bounds. What I should like to point out is that the cooperative has a real purpose, but because of its highly civilized character it is limited to those people who are able to handle it. Not all people can be members and be satisfied with the cooperative, but those who can will find in cooperation an opportunity for genuine culture, an expression of their material needs, the pride that comes with ownership, as well as a fine weapon for economic reform.

The cooperative can lead American industry away from the profit motive into a service motive by maintaining its position as a strong minority even as it is in Sweden, where its function as an economic yardstick has been encouragingly successful. How can it do this? Primarily as a competitive force. It can educate its members to new and saner tastes and as a crusading force it can debunk the setup of the present time, thereby forcing the private industrialist to more useful activity. Thus a group of public-spirited citizens can act as real guardians to the nation while benefitting themselves.

Cooperatives in the Parish

***By* Ray Scott**

The distinction between cooperatives, as such, and cooperation as a technique aiding social reconstruction is the chief point of misunderstanding in the American cooperative movement. Lacking an adequate social philosophy, the leaders of the movement have no objective social program to which to apply the efforts of the organized consumers, hence the "movement" turns in upon itself and finds an end in perfecting its own technique for getting the most of the best for the least. In a society where cooperation is the natural expression of a social sense this result is of course inevitable, but in such case it is merely an incidental fruit of the main purpose. Cooperation, in those countries where it has effected a significant social regeneration, has had in view something more than a better way to buy groceries, and in fact the two ends, enlightened self interest and the good of society, if pursued strictly as such, seem mutually exclusive.

Perhaps the vast difference between "consumers' cooperation" as such and "cooperation" as the natural technique of a socially conscious community is best illustrated by ranging the various "cooperative movements" roughly in the order in which they run the gamut from a better way to buy groceries to a "way of life" of a socially regenerated people. At one end of the scale is England, with reputedly the largest volume of cooperative business in the world. These co-ops are patronized chiefly by the poorer people and they have had absolutely no social significance beyond affording economical living. Somewhat up the

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scale is Sweden. Here the significance of consumer's cooperation has transcended the more primitive purpose it serves in England in as much as it also provides, besides lower prices, a check on the greed of "capitalism," and incidentally serves as an "uplifting" if paternalistic influence for the material benefit of the workers. It competes with the "trusts" only by doing the same job more economically, and while it does not penalize labor in the matter of wages and hours it does, perforce, cling to the depersonalizing, collective production system and is thus essentially as anti-social as finance capitalism. In Denmark the picture has been very different. There, under the more spiritual influence of Bishop Gruntvig, the impoverished small farmers got together for mutual aid. There first of all was a basic social objective, the rehabilitation of a people, and there was a sound foundation, the individual and more or less effective ownership of small farms and other means of production. Provide under these circumstances the stimulus of adult self-education and there can be, as in fact there was, cooperation as "the voluntary association of effectively free people in order to accomplish cooperatively what it would be impractical for any one to attempt separately." On this basis wonders can be accomplished socially and in Denmark wonders were. The question there now is whether this program has not gone beyond a healthy point, under the influence of contemporary materialistic philosophy, for the government of Denmark has become so geared into world trade as to somewhat regiment the "effective freedom" of the individual. To compensate for this it has evolved other socialistic "welfare" measures. More and more the state becomes the dominant influence.

Nova Scotia

In Nova Scotia the beginnings of the cooperative movement parallel the case of Denmark, notably in the dominance of the spiritual motive of the leader, Father Tompkins. In both Denmark and Nova Scotia American cooperators see merely an ideal cooperative movement and miss completely the two much more significant lessons. First, that the basis of the revolution in both cases was adult education, not consumers' cooperation, and secondly such cooperative effort as is now apparent in the social reconstruction, and which appears to them to be consumer's cooperation, is really based on something quite different, namely "the voluntary association of effectively free people," a condition antithetical to that in the States. The Danes used their farms, their means of production, more effectively. The Nova Scotians used their axes and their boats more effectively.

And because both people had a tradition and a social vision they naturally took to common effort to make it a reality. Contrary-wise, the great mass of America's cooperating consumers have no means of production, no tradition, no social vision and will not buckle down to adult education to acquire a foundation for intelligent cooperative effort. They have at the most only tokens (i.e., money) and their cooperative effort takes the form of getting the most of the best of someone else's production with the least tribute to private profit. The net result must be complete collectivism, the only check upon which, in the minds of the cooperative leaders, is a balance of power between collective groups, labor, farmer and consumer. What then should be the objective of the parish cooperative? In general the effort of the parish cooperators should be directed to achieving the greatest possible independence for the members of the parish. This of course involves them in heresy toward the cooperative movement, for instead of trying to boost the wholesale they should keep steadily before them the very opposite goal, namely to become as independent of the wholesale as possible, depending on the resources of the members and of the parish, or on negotiations with small primary producers. First each man and each family does as much as it can itself to attain self-sufficiency, and even in a poor urban parish this can be a great deal, given adult education and proper motivation; then the community of families help each other. Only when reasonable and frugal comfort depend on trading with very large or distant units should the parish co-op make use of the trading facility of the wholesale.

Gulls: Summer

Surely no other birds have so much fun
  As gulls that trail a boat from land to land,
Drifting on currents made of wind and sun.
  Their harlequin faces, confident and bland,

Look gravely down upon the small dominions
  Of a boat's deck where People have to stay,
While they, on scarcely-moving sickle-pinions,
  Have a whole world of air in which to play.

They slide down unseen chutes; they hook their wings
  Over invisible guiding-ropes of air;
They ride, imperious as little kings;
  They climb a sudden, hidden, windy stair.

The steamer turns; their even ranks are shattered,
  They fall like rain down upon wave and shoal,
They whirl like smoke, like feathers they are scattered,
They drift like petals in a finger-bowl.

And, rising with the wind, they follow down
  To call again the ancient salty roster . . .
Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Provincetown,
  New Bedford, Salem, Kittery, Portsmouth, Gloucester!

Louise Owen.

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Raining Cats and Dogs

"America becomes animal-conscious" with pets as well as farm animals.

By Charles Morrow Wilson

AMONG the wilder gulches of Arizona, on the Navajo reservation, I passed a mixed flock of sheep and goats. As I floundered along the rutted gulch of a road, two lank black dogs left the flock and came roaring after me. At that moment my auto began going clupp-clupp-clupp with a flat tire. I climbed out of the seat virtually into the jaws of carnivorous sounding canines.

A Navajo woman who had also been tending the flock came trotting up chanting a sluice of Navajo which, to the untutored ear, sounds like Chinese sprinkled with Swedish. I remarked in English that her dogs were extremely attractive, intelligent and beautiful. She favored me with an expansive grin and lapsed into English to tell me that her mother and grandmothers and great-grandmothers before her had owned dogs and used them to herd, hunt and fight, with the help of their husbands. (She must have meant Navajo husbands.) She said that more than four centuries ago her people had acquired dogs from the first Spanish explorers of the far Southwest; that during her childhood her grandmother grew wealthy trading in dogs while other clan members were starving in the sheep-and-goat business. She said she had paid $25 apiece for her two dogs. And according to estimates of the US Indian Service, $50 is approximately an average annual cash income for a Navajo family.

The episode caused me to realize that the dog is in truth the most indigenous of all American animal possessions. It was a cherished property of the red men long before the white brethren touched these shores in any considerable number. Presumably Indian dogs were mongrel. But they must have been a widely bartered article of commerce among most North American tribes. The earlier files on Indian Affairs, US State Department, talk much of dog properties and problems. Captain Meriwether Lewis, leading the renowned Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific, described dogs as standard properties of many of the great Western tribes who then had little or no acquaintance with white men. The great Indian revolutionist and prophet Tecumseh and the great Indian bard Sequoyah, inventor of the written language of the Cherokee nation, both described dogs as a virtuous possession of their people, while abominating Indian ownership of cats as coming from the demoralizing influence of the degenerate white man.

More and more grandiloquently we keep right on going to the dogs. The American Kennel Club, which is an association of about 190 dog clubs of the United States, estimates that the nation now has at least 15,000,000 dogs under license or tax assessment. There are probably as many as 10,000,000 dogs without license. Excluding the purchases of dogs, which runs into many millions of dollars monthly (the editor of a dog gazette estimates it at $150,000,000 yearly), Kennel Club estimates contend that the US public now spends about $600,000,000 a year for the upkeep of dogs —foods, supplies, services and accessories. The estimate is based upon an average canine maintenance cost of ten cents per day, which is extremely conservative.

This is merely another way of saying that the US public now spends more for dogs than for shoes or public hospitals or books, indeed almost as much for dogs as for higher education. In a pre-Roosevelt era we might have run our Federal government upon what we spend for dogs, and the dog budget today would support half a million US families.

In the parlance of advertising, that Navajo woman is just a reflector of a trend, and the dauntless Coronado, who may have brought the first dogs to the Spanish Southwest, certainly started something. In terms of canine spending we are world leaders. Prices of pedigreed dogs average some 50 percent higher today than in 1930. There are probably at least 75 US show dogs valued at $10,000 each, though from a standpoint of recorded sale and cash payment, tops in dog prices remains $9,500 for a Chow purchased in England by a Mrs. Earl Hoover of Chicago. The Chow was Champion Choonam Brilliantine of Manchoovia Kennel, which is all right with me if it is with you.

Dog breeding and registry

About 1,135,000 purebred dogs are registered or listed by the American Kennel Club. There are 108 breeds of dogs listed, and optional value of dogs under registry is perhaps not less than half a billion dollars. About 300 accredited

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dog shows each year established about 1,000 champions.

However, winning a championship is a mere start toward value status. The next step is for the champion to participate in "variety groups," where he must compete against various breeds, strains and ages of dogs. Having won one or more variety groups the mutt begins to acquire value. Once rated for stud value a male dog can almost literally become worth his weight in gold. For $500 stud fees are not exceptional, although offspring of a $4,000 dog aren't necessarily worth $4,000 or $400 or even $4.00.

This suggests another paradox in the prevailing fantasia of American dogdom. Best accredited dog husbandry and the pioneer registries of dogs were largely for the so-called "working" breeds—dogs which justify their values in beneficial services, such as hunting or retrieving, herding livestock or safeguarding homes and properties. But nowadays our canine accent is upon show breeds—dogs propagated and kept primarily for beauty or as casual pets. We are stupidly changing dozens of former working breeds, such as Great Danes (Boar Hounds), German shepherds, poodles (originally a German hunting dog), sheep dogs and various setter and pointer strains to mere "pets." We have largely replaced the wiry black-and-white working or herding collie (the real Scotch collie) with highly bred fashion plates in gold, blue, white and varied far-fetched hues. We are glorifying the so-called lap dogs, which now includes a long catalogue of the "toy" breeds, many of which from an accredited registry standpoint are not breeds at all, or even strains, but simply degenerate throw-backs.

True, there are impressive exceptions to this generality. One is the admirable Seeing Eye Foundation which trains dogs for service to the blind; the persistent and unpublicized New England Sheep Dog Trail Association, which works quietly to maintain a few well-chosen herding dogs and to cooperate with large and more renowned working dog associations of the British Isles, Africa and Australia; and individual dog training clubs and kennels which seek to develop reliable strains of watch-dogs and child comrade dogs.

But, broadly stated, *dumb mutt* involves more truth than poetry, as the American Kennel Club has so pertinently and unintentionally demonstrated with its recently adopted catalogues of "obedience tests," based upon the inference that dog obedience is dog intelligence.

The first official scores of these tests gave first place to the poodle, which the Club immediately described as the "dog nobody knows." The true poodle, by the way, is no lap dog at all, but a German breed of duck dog or water hunter. Its weight is between 40 and 50 pounds, its shoulder height about 20 inches and there probably aren't a dozen real poodles in the entire United States today. Yet from the standpoint of the Kennel Club's own test, the poodle is the only outstandingly intelligent registry in the United States. Its scores averaged 652 points. Doberman pinchers came next with 264; German shepherds third, with 200; and Great Danes fourth, with 181. The fox terrier, Newfoundland, chow, schnauzer, Irish setter, Keeshonden and Chesapeake Bays also scored "honors," but top registries of more than 90 cherished American dog breeds failed completely to score ratings in this most lenient of competitive mental tests.

Dog luxuries

Dumb pooches or no, we have gotten to be the world's doggiest country. In New York, our doggiest town, the classified directory lists dog surgeons, barbers, manicures, haberdashers, clubs and food services, not to mention professional attendants and exercisers to dogs.

A Madison Avenue pet shop advertises itself as "Groomer and Haberdasher to Dogs" and a New York department store features dog garments in more than 90 different styles, including jackets and capes of Camel's hair and Scottish plaids. A renowned New York sports store maintains a dog shop stocked with hundreds of canine accessories including rain capes, woven jackets, leather mittens, fur-lined goloshes, dog soaps, tonics, shampoos, perfumes, nail polishes, nail snippers, hair stimulators and anti-halitosis preparations.

A dog bath club in Manhattan accepts pooch members at annual fees, administers dog manicures in cobalt blue stalls, sun-treatments on the roof-garden. Also umbrella shaded naps and a dog swimming pool. A New York dog surgeon tells me that pyorrhea is one of the most common of modern ailments; that stomach ulcers are a principal reason for dog surgery and that dog obstetrics are growing more and more complex. Near Park Avenue I visited a canine beauty salon which cleans, plucks, files, polishes and otherwise beautifies any mutt whose owner has eight dollars for the overhaul.

Dog foods are important merchandise in some quarter-million groceries and markets throughout the United States. The American Express Company provides about 11,000,000 dog railroad rides yearly. Increasing weakness of dog constitutions nurtures a multi-million-dollar commerce in dog medicines, drugs and remedies. Police departments repeatedly record organized rings of dog thieves and there is at least one national society for the prevention of dog stealing. There are at least 19 dog cemeteries under listing, and there is a commercial manufacturer of dog coffins, vaults and monuments.

Cats, too

This insane odyssey of the show dog, this canine fantasia of the soft heart and sappy head,

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finds counterpart in the modern story of the cat. We have no reliable statistics on cats, and no accredited breed registry. Somewhat more prolific than dogs, cats are definitely less countable. But at least 99 percent of the talk of "purebred" or "registered" cats is sheerest eyewash, however many millions or tens of millions of alleged "fine" cats happen to be lapping cream, raiding fish baskets or fighting in the back alley at this very moment.

Scientific husbandry has never yet smiled upon the domestic housecat. Alleged breeds such as the Persian, Siamese, and mink are better describable as strains than as breeds. The same is true of "preponderant species," such as the so-called Maine 'cooncat. Accredited breeds of cats are a possibility, but presumably many years of supervised registry and breed control would be requisite for changing such a possibility to fact.

Yet our cat commerce is notable. The chief purchasing agent for a national chain novelty store advises me that purchases of cat foods and accoutrements—that is, canned preparations, harnesses and leashes, catnip novelties, collars, bells and toys—average near 20 percent of the corresponding volume of dog merchandise. Certainly cats supply a growing part of veterinary practice and the cat medicine trade has easily doubled within the past ten years. Pet shop sales of cats also are increasing, but this reporter is unable to assemble any reliable statistics of cat merchandising. He merely observes that streets, highways and country lanes alike are variously aswarm with cats. Further that the popularity of cats seems to increase with the ever-growing popularity of dogs.

In the aggregate our growing accent upon the domestic pet begins to take on a background of social significance as well as semi-conscious comedy. No doubt it is occasioned in part by the diminishing birthrate among middle class people, who clasp the household pet as a partial substitute for the child. It reflects, perhaps, the widespread weakening of matrimonial ties and woman's growing place in the competition of earning a living. Half-a-century ago the dog was the traditional property of man or boy. Now, at least in urban areas, women are actually the principal purchasers of dogs and dog supplies. Presumably women have always been the premier fanciers of cats.

Our nationwide heyday of dogs and cats demonstrates various changes in economic theory. We spend more for domestic pets than for any corresponding species of productive livestock, which suggests that classifications of "necessities," "luxuries" and "extravagances" rapidly become obsolete. Perhaps it is good time many of them were. But on the ground of human values this onlooker regards the prevalent indoor deluge of dogs and cats as a rather extreme symptom of American decadence.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IN CONSIDERING the news from Europe, the average reader of the press is compelled by the nature of the situation he is up against to base his opinions as to the likelihood of world war again being imminent mainly upon his hope for peace, rather than upon objective facts. When the most experienced and conscientious correspondents and commentators are found in agreement with responsible statesmen and public officials, especially in their "off the record" remarks, in frankly confessing their inability to understand the baffling complexities of the international problems, it is no wonder that most members of the general public, including the more thoughtful individuals are inclined to give up the effort and to drift along from day to day, hoping for the best.

There is a great deal to be said in favor of such an attitude, when it is honest and sound, and is not merely a sort of moral and spiritual indifference, or lack of ability even to make an effort to deal with a crisis which, if it be real at all, and not merely a scare produced by exaggerated publicity, affects all human beings, whether they live near or remote to the innumerable scenes of tension and conflict. For there is a tremendous power in human hope, even when it is not inspired by the spiritual inspiration of the Christian conception of hope as one of the fundamental supernatural virtues. When many millions of average men and women, in all the troubled nations of the earth, persist, as they unquestionably seem to be doing, in thinking that in spite of all the signs and omens of impending war, that, after all, there will be no great general war, simply because their deepest reason is their hope, such an attitude of mind and spirit may turn out to be a more reliable index than all the so-called "expert" judgments of this question of questions. At least, let us hope so!

This may be an example of fallacious "wishful thinking," and, on the other hand, it may be a reflection of something more powerful, and infinitely more helpful, than all the turbulent currents of conflicting "facts," and opinions, and deliberate lies, and mere guesses which are commingled in the vast flood of so-called news inundating the press and spilling through the radio channels of all the world. It may be a reflection of the truth that in spite of the mobilization of vast armies and navies and air forces, and the substitution of armament manufacture for peaceful industry and trade as the main business of so many nations, indeed, perhaps, of most of them, mankind in the mass is turning firmly away from the will to fight. Their rulers and governmental leaders are gambling desperately in this situation; and may through some reckless move in the general game of bluff and threat, or through some chance blunder in playing the deadly cards, bring about the actual conflict, the danger of which has been used as a weapon of diplomacy, or power politics, especially during the last few years. If international fight-

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ing does result, in spite of all diplomacy, and in spite of the yearning hope of the helpless millions of human beings who are today the mere pawns of the governing powers, the war between the nations may soon be transformed into a sort of universal civil war, or general revolution, of class against class, and the last institutions of western civilization would then be shattered completely. Only despotic governments could possibly rise out of the ruins.

Granting that the instinctive hope of the vast multitudes of the people—which a Christian may be justified in thinking to be inspired by a wisdom high above animal, or natural instinct—proves to be better grounded than the fears aroused by the factual news of today, it seems inevitable that the nations must still remain, for a long time to come, burdened by the dead weight of the armament struggle. How this burden is to be materially alleviated without bringing about an even worse business depression than the one with which we are dealing all over the world, is a problem that will tax the good will, the patience, and the ingenuity of the rulers and leaders of the world. But at any rate, it is a task that would encourage, and be supported by, the masses of the people far more than the dread-producing, hatred-breeding, ruinous international armaments race.

One of the most horrible facts to be culled from the press today is quoted by the New York *Times* from a recent annual report of the Krupps armament works, of Germany. Before Hitler, this firm employed 46,000 workers; today, more than one hundred thousand. "The committee desires to report," said the last paragraph of the document, "that it has taken full cognizance of reports that a conference designed to bring to pass a reduction of armaments is to be held, and that it has definitely established that these reports are baseless. The industry may, therefore, be assured that the coming year will be a period of undisturbed activity and steadily increasing prosperity."

"Business Is Business," the *Times* heads the editorial article discussing this report, and pointing out that not only in Germany, under Hitler, but in lands which ostensibly repudiate all Hitlerian policies, the business of making and selling arms, for a profit, not only for the use of the national armies of such countries, but for all buyers who have the price to pay for them, even although tomorrow the arms may be used against the nations whose business men, and workers, provide the arms, is going briskly forward. England, France, Holland, and the United States are all making profits in this grim commerce. Evidence was recently offered to the English government by a member of parliament who himself is an engineer in a firm having relations with the munition industry that swollen profits were the rule rather than the exception in that trade; but his evidence was not accepted for investigation, and his own offer to provide armament at cost price, without profits at all, summarily rejected. Well, it all goes to show that world war or no world war, mankind will not lack problems stirred up by business, as well as by dictators. Corrupt and greedy politicians and business men, indeed, are the path-makers for the dictators.

Communications

"FINNEGANS WAKE"

Elmira, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I have been away from my desk for two months, and only today have I come to THE COMMONWEAL of July 7. Of course, THE COMMONWEAL is not responsible for this; but it will, perhaps, serve as an excuse for requesting space for a belated reference to the review of "Finnegans Wake," which appeared in that issue.

Not being an "artist" of any kind, I may be incompetent to pass judgment on the author, the book or the review. Still, as an ordinary Catholic reader who has been reading books and reviews of books for two generations, I may be permitted to ask: what is the purpose of a book-review in a Catholic periodical? In my simplicity I had always thought it was to let Catholic readers know what they are to think of the book from a Catholic point of view; what, *as Catholics,* they should know of the book in order to decide whether they should buy and read it (this is clearly the purpose of publishers when they send in free copies); and to have an answer when asked by their friends, Catholic or non-Catholic, what they think of it. Whatever else a review might do, I thought it should at least do that.

Candidly, I have neither bought nor read the book. I did (God forgive me!) read "Ulysses." I thought it a duty at the time, when the ban was lifted from its circulation in this country, and when, because of the propaganda in its praise, so many Catholics were perturbed and asked for advice. I had read many books; but with none had I ever been so horrified—pagan in the worst moral meaning of that term, indecent, obscene, lecherous, blasphemous. Has James Joyce changed in the meantime? Is "Finnegans Wake" in these respects different from "Ulysses"? Is it a book fit to be placed "on living room tables" in Catholic homes?

To these and other questions asked by Catholics disturbed in their consciences two or three years ago, when "Ulysses" was allowed to circulate, there is no answer in Mr. Barry Byrne's review. He tells us, however, that it "conveys an impression of strange and unusual beauty," "the beauty arises from the strange and haunting music of its prose," "it is preeminently a literature made into music . . . one of compelling beauty," "as this type of writing is an esoteric expression, *its final and only possible effect* (my italics) may be one of . . . etc." Now all that (except the last quote) may be true. Mr. Byrne is an artist. But if I am told that he has considered the book only from the artist's point of view, my answer is: *haec oportet facere (forsitan!) et illa non omittere.* There is something more important for the Catholic conscience than this new idolatry of art for art's sake.

I have not read the book. So, for further information I turn from the Catholic COMMONWEAL to the secular *Atlantic Monthly.* The reviewer in the *Atlantic* is also an artist, Richard Aldington. At least he has made an international reputation as a poet and novelist. He has

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read the book—what, I believe, cannot be said of the majority of reviewers in the secular press. He says he has "spent several hours a day for more than a fortnight in wretched toil over these 628 pages, and has no intention of wasting one more minute of precious life over Mr. Joyce's futile inventions, tedious ingenuities, and verbal freaks." Clearly there is room for difference even from the artists' point of view! But, as I have intimated, what Catholics need to know is how the book appears from the moral and Christian point of view. Here is Mr. Aldington's considered judgment after a fortnight's study: "This heavy compost is frequently infected with that lecherous suggestiveness of which Mr. Joyce is a master, which was defended in 'Ulysses' as germane to the characters, but which here seems to have no purpose more interesting than the author's morose delectation."

Mr. Byrne thinks it "safe to say that its appearance on living room tables will be no indication that its owners have read it." But he immediately gives the reason, only *one* reason, which is very different from that given by the *Atlantic:* "It is too difficult a task for that . . . it is baffling." Can Mr. Byrne imagine this book lying on the living room table of a Catholic home for the inspection of visitors, or on his own table if he has a wife and children attending high school? And that reminds me. Recently I was for two or three days the guest of a Catholic gentleman, highly educated, an omnivorous reader, well known to the public in his community. One evening the conversation turned to Joyce. "By the way," I said, "have you still 'Ulysses'?" (He was reading it when I visited him two years ago.) He went over to the bookcase, got down on his knees, opened the lower shelf, took out half a dozen books, and finally extracted "Ulysses" from its hiding place under a pile of old papers at the back of the shelf. "I have kept it," he said, "as I may need to refer to it some time, but I don't wish any other person to see it in my house."

I suspect—but I may be mistaken—a reason for Mr. Byrne's omissions on the one hand and his lyrical praise of Joyce's artistry on the other. Mr. Byrne's name and surname suggest a Celtic origin. My own were both known in Ireland before the advent of Saint Patrick. Like many of us in this country whose knowledge of Ireland came from hearing panegyrics on Saint Patrick's Day, he may have grown up with the idea that nothing quite bad can come out of Ireland. If that is so, it is high time to get rid of the idea, if we are not to have some day a rude awakening—as we have had in that "most Catholic country" which is called Spain.

Rev. Owen B. McGuire.

THE FEDERAL THEATRE

Newport, R. I.

TO the Editors: In her letter to The Commonweal Lucy Young Fisk takes me to task for what she thinks I meant in my article on the Federal Theatre. Had I meant what she thinks I would have deserved indeed her castigation. But my ideas were far otherwise. When I wrote "the world does not owe a living to those who act or paint or write" I meant, as I intimated below in my article, that it does not owe it unless what they produce is of unusual merit. There are very few writers or artists who are in this category, and the vast majority of those who were supported by the Federal Arts projects did not belong to it. What I meant was that mediocre or worse than mediocre art is not deserving of governmental support. The average man or woman can do excellent work, work worthy of support in his or her particular field, but there are few whose true field is the arts. It is simply this fact that I referred to. I realize as well as anyone how difficult it is to determine just what is unusual in the arts, but it is done, though not, alas, as a rule by governmental agencies, at least in Anglo-Saxon lands. Yet I do believe and believe sincerely that this latter will in time be accomplished. The trouble is that it was not done in the Federal Theatre Project, and could not be done, because that Project was primarily one of relief. I simply made the point that tax-payers should not be made to pay for the desires of a large number of people to express themselves artistically when they had nothing but mediocrity to express. These people might have done admirable work in other fields, but the theatre was not one of them.

Grenville Vernon.

"CATHOLICS AND THE AMERICAN WAY"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Each time I read Robert C. Pollock's "Catholics and the American Way"—(three times so far) I feel better—happier that I am a Catholic, that I am an American, and that I am one of those in "the workers' movement for economic democracy." My Catholic friends all feel the same way as I do. To be reminded of the democratic traditions of the Church—especially now when anti-Catholics, in the name of "Catholicism," dare to pervert the doctrines of the Church into fascist gibberish—is gratifying enough; but best of all is the positive, forward sweep of Mr. Pollock's article, with its prophecy of "a still deeper and richer interaction between Catholicism and democracy." The writer has shown us the way to bring about the fulfillment of this prophecy—let us hope that Catholics all over this country will read his words not only to be stirred in their pride and gratitude, but stimulated to act in defense of their precious religious-democratic heritage.

Ellen Killeen.

REFUGEES AND TALENTS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In your editorial comments on the refugee question in the August 25 issue, why do you make such a point of the Ickes report on Alaska? It has cost a mint to maintain the 110 families still living at the Matanuska Valley settlement and testimony on their future is mighty conflicting. Is the idea that Americans would like to settle refugees in Alaska because it is so far away? The United States is obviously far from overpopulated. Canada is currently reporting great gains from refugees' skills and capital. Let's welcome more and more of these courageus Europeans to our own 48 states!

John B. Sage.

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Points & Lines

What about Chrisitan Art?

IN AN article entitled, "The Liturgy As Art" written expressly for the brilliantly edited, *Liturgical Arts* quarterly, Dom Hammenstede, O.S.B. observes that:

> We may say of art in general that it is the incorporation in an external and beautiful form of an idea or thought which by its nature pleases. It is essential that art have a beautiful form. *Pulchrum est quod visum placet.*

Abbot Herwegen, O.S.B., points out in the same publication:

> Art has been the daughter of religion ever since human history began . . . and Christian art is a flower from the tree of the cross—a beam from the transfigured countenance of the risen and victorious Christ. From the august burial chambers of the catacombs to the house of worship just built, the Church and art have always been companions. . . . Religious art must by its very nature, be a social art. That is, it must grow out of the common Faith, thought, experience, life and not least of all, the common worship of the Church. The individuality of the artistic personality cannot, therefore be its norm. The objective norms of the community must come first. . . .
>
> No element of life within the Church is without tradition; neither is art. With all its development and all its progress, it is rooted in the past, is linked to tradition, and is woven successively into the new growth; this also is a characteristic of the community which, embracing all times and all nations, recognizes itself as one great entity in the Communio Sanctorum, the Communion of Saints. . . . It is the highest and greatest mission of the art of the Church to lead the Christian Community to Christ, and to dedicate its highest and best to Him as the Head of the Church in Heaven and on earth. . . . Finally in as much as all true greatness is linked with balance, and all real meaning with form the art of the Church demands formal restrained expression. A combination of early Christian Roman grandeur and medieval, Germanic depth of feeling, crowned with the distinguished beauty of the antique—that is the ideal of religious art, an ideal which in the consummate synthesis of form and expression, tradition and progress, assures a truly communal art.

Ivan Brooks comments in *Blackfriars* upon Jacques Maritain's dictum: "Do not undertake the ridiculous enterprise of dissociating within yourself the artist and the Christian. They are one if you are truly Christian, and if your art is not isolated from your soul by some aesthetic system. But apply the artist only to the work, and precisely because they are one, the work will be entirely that of both."

> The apparent separation of art from life, which would seem to be so marked a feature of our own country and our own times, is the fruit of centuries of development. And although the dogmatic enunciation of the "Art for Art's sake" creed was long delayed—delayed indeed until the late nineteenth century, the period of Whistler and of Oscar Wilde—the seeds of isolation were sown at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, when the whole field of European culture was harrowed by these "liberating" movements, and since when there has been a continuous tendency for the artist to depart further and further from the ken of the common people and to rise steadily in the social scale. In the fourteenth century the artist had indeed been sometimes a monk, but much more frequently he had been a peasant, even a serf. In the sixteenth century he might be a courtier, in the eighteenth century a knight. Victoria showed that he might even aspire to the Peerage. But the artist's gradual conquest of the heights of gentility was by no means an unmixed blessing to the community at large, for as he himself rose above the ranks of the common people he unfortunately took his painting and his influence with him. In England his work disappeared from the walls of the churches and found its way, first to the private galleries of the artist's new-found peers, the landed gentry, and eventually to the public galleries of the great cities. It was soon to disappear from shop-signs, and today even inn-signs are the product of the machine. We may still admire the artist's work in the galleries (often free of charge), but we must not think of taking it home with us. It is governmental or municipal property. If we belong to the middle class of society, we buy a few reproductions and hang them about our flats. If we belong to the "working class," we just forget all about it.

Joan Morris writes in the London *Art Notes:*

> We all know how for centuries the growth of material thought, of industrialism, has borne fruit in the decadence of public taste, in the degradation of art. That a divorce between the Church and art should develop was inevitable, and that her form of adornment should become almost a form of blasphemy. No thinking Catholic of today accepts the examples of what we have been accustomed to entitle "Catholic repository art" as serious apprehensions of the Catholic faith; neither does he imagine that they have been created by an artist with intent only for the glorification of God and of His Church. Those who have become attached to pious statues obviously devoid of any form of apprehension whatever, have of themselves supplied these symbolic and sentimental attachments.

And *The Christian Social Art Quarterly* of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind., laments that:

> Art is conceived by most Catholic educators today as a frill and is not indispensible to an essentially Catholic life. Most of the educated people one meets have some 'art appreciation'; that is, they know a smattering of statistics and a little personal gossip concerning artists and their work. But the active principle, art itself as the constructive faculty of the race, has been consistently overlooked. It is only natural that it should be so.
>
> Our whole educational system is directed toward specialization. As a rule scholars know their books, lawyers their precedents, and salesmen their line, but when the simplest household gadget refuses to work, they have to 'get a man to fix it.' They are mentally educated but their constructive faculty has been amazingly neglected.

L'Art Sacré published under the direction of the French Dominican fathers remarks à propos the International Exposition of sacred art held recently in Vitoria, Spain:

> The work of reconstruction could lead us far afield if we did not adhere to the twin bulwarks of aesthetic dignity and liturgical piety. On the one hand we have the production of works in commercial series which is less dangerous for the ideal of beauty than it is for authentic piety; on the other hand we find the professional vanity of certain artists, who, because of a curious notion of the social function of art, fall into an affectation of originality which they call their own independent personality.
>
> In order to offset their tendencies nothing is more effective than liturgical laws as they affect the object devoted to worship.

Jacques Maritain declared in his classic, "Art and Scholasticism":

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> But art remains always essentially in the sphere of *making* and it is by drudgery upon some matter that it aims at rejoicing the spirit. Hence for the artist a strange and pathetic condition, the very image of man's condition in the world, where he is condemned to wear himself out among bodies and live with minds.

Yet if the words of St. Anthony, "There can be no perfect prayer if the religious is himself aware that he is praying" are true, then it is also true to say that the artist should not be self-conscious of his art but merely work at it so as to produce a good and decent job. The Christian artist should simply live the full life of the Christian liturgy and if he is a competent and worthy craftsman he will do a good job. As Jacques Maritain says in the book referred to above:

> And yet the Church, in the Mass, is not searching for beauty or decorative motifs or a means of touching the hearts. Her sole object is worship and union with her Saviour, and from this loving worship an excess of beauty overflows.

Maurice Lavanoux, editor of *Liturgical Arts,* mentioned some of the noted Christian artists in an article in the *Architectural Record,* entitled "Recent Trends in Catholic Church Design in America:"

> There is every indication that further improvement can be expected if pastors and prelates lead the way by encouraging many outstanding artists already active in many fields; for example, Hildreth Meiere, Charlton Fortune, Jean Charlot, Adelaide de Bethune, Graham Carey, John Howard Benson, Robert Amendola, Harry Donohue, Eugene Savage, Thomas LaFarge, Albert Wood, Frank Aretz, Michaela Martinez, Frank A. Schwarz, Thorsten Sigstedt, Adam Dabrowski, Alfred E. Floegel, Frances Skinner, Leo Cartwright, Alfonso Iannelli, Annette Byrne, Virginia Wood, Lauren Ford, Alfredo Ramos Martinez, Maximilien Vanka, Edgar Miller, Peter Traphagen, Arthur Nevill Kirk, and many others.

The author points out in the same article that the application of modern technics to church construction does not preclude the possibility of creating what is termed "ecclesiastical atmosphere."

> What, after all, does this atmosphere consist of, if not of those elements that produce a structure in which the needs of the celebrant at the altar and the congregation in the pews are met? Are these needs reasonably met nowadays by bad lighting, bad acoustics, bad ventilation, etc.? Was not the romantically "mysterious and darkened interior" after all the product of the building technic of the Middle Ages? If all the requirements are met, and with a competent architect in the saddle, the *atmosphere* will take care of itself.

He also gives some examples of churches liturgically correct:

> There is a growing number of churches in which can be found excellent sculpture, paintings, glass, etc.—Church of the Sacred Heart, Pittsburgh; Saint Ann's Church, Hamilton, Ohio; Church of Mary Star of the Sea, La Jolla, Calif.; the Chapel of Saint Thomas More, New Haven, Connecticut.

Perhaps one way to encourage a native Christian art here is to impose a substantial customs duty on all ecclesiastical work imported in the United States, whether they be gifts to a parish or not. This would also be instrumental in getting rid of the second-rate European ornamentation found in so many churches and Christian institutions.

The Screen

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LIKE a refreshing breeze on a mid-summer's day comes "Fifth Avenue Girl," one of those spirited comedies that will win no prizes for depth, but make you light hearted and thankful for its clever lines, smart direction and lively performances. Poor Walter Connolly, a millionaire, upset by labor troubles in his plant, alone in his baronial Fifth Avenue mansion, wonders why people work so hard and for what. Chipper Ginger Rogers, broke and jobless, munching her supper in Central Park, knows that something will turn up. It does when Walter offers her a job to make over his family. The Glad-Girl goes to work with vigor. Walter's wife (played by Verree Teasdale who knows how to punch a line) learns to stay home and behave; Daughter elopes with the masses-minded chauffeur (the humor goes a bit sour here); and Son makes eyes at Ginger. There's not much foundation for a romance, but this 1939 Pollyanna should be able to fix things for herself. Gregory La Cava, who directed "My Man Friday" which this resembles, does not allow Allan Scott's wisecracking screenplay to drag long enough for audiences to think about its old-fashioned theme, but keeps them in a state of hilarity.

We have been having our share lately of films about single women and married men. "When Tomorrow Comes," produced and directed by John M. Stahl, tells a story of a waitress who carries on a flirtation with a pianist. They go sailing, fall in love, spend the night in a church where a hurricane forces them to take shelter. She tearfully says goodbye to him after she is confronted with his demented wife. Now all this is awkwardly and slowly put together and is likely to leave you unmoved. Barbara O'Neil, doing an excellent piece of acting as the deranged wife, is the only one who seems real and makes her problem important. Svelte Irene Dunne, much too classy as a waitress, may win workers with her speeches in the interesting strike sequences, but she is cold in her scenes with Charles Boyer (he of the bright, languid eyes and cigarette drooping from sensuous lips). The hurricane is exciting; the church episode is done simply; but the ending seems silly. Why should Irene wait around for a French pianist when she has a handsome and intelligent strike organizer (Onslow Stevens) who is aching to be nice to her?

Years ago we saw many pictures about Bill, a typical American boy who falls in love with Manon, a beautiful half-caste in a warm, exotic country; he marries her in spite of disapproving white folk and insinuations that the beauty's relationships with rich, influential Delaroch have not been on the up-and-up. Bill and Manon are happy until Bill finds Delaroch's cigarette case in his dressing gown; he grabs a gun; she grabs a gun; happiness is smashed. Ben Hecht rehashed all this with fancy trimmings and a French Indo-China setting; Jack Conway directed; and Hedy LaMarr and Robert Taylor turn on the glamour in "Lady of the Tropics."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Books of the Week

Rural Industrialism

Factories in the Fields, by Carey McWilliams. Boston: Little Brown and Company. $2.50.

THIS BOOK is a chapter in the history of land-ownership in California with its racial exploitation, migratory agricultural workers, anti-labor union warfare and homeless, voteless dust bowl immigrants. Prior to 1860, farming in California was pastoral in character, chiefly the work of cultivating the fields set out by the missions. But after 1860, farming became a large scale industry. "The methods used by the missionaries were promptly jettisoned by the land buccaneers who came into power with the American conquest."

The author describes the process of land monopolization whereby the Americans took over Mexican land grants which could be real, forged or bogus; by large railroad groups and by land speculation. He then describes the parade of agricultural workers who labored in the fields of California. First came the Chinese and Indians. They worked well but race hatred eliminated the Chinaman. Then came the Japanese who made a definite contribution to the agriculture of California. Resentment against the Japanese resulted in the Immigration Act, excluding them from entrance, and the Alien Land Act.

Other nationals who sought to make a living in the industrialized agriculture of California were the Hindus, known as Rag-heads, Armenians, Mexicans and Filipinos. The latest group to arrive are white, native Americans from the dust bowl of Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas; refugees from drought and disaster. It is estimated that a total of 221,000 immigrants from various states have entered California since 1933. The author informs us that the mammoth farm factories of California "have been built by cheap Oriental and peon labor, imported for a particular purpose and discarded as soon as that purpose has been achieved. For over half a century this sordid business of race exploitation has been going on in the state and it would be difficult to find a meaner record of exploitation in the history of American industry . . ." The author pays his respects to what he calls the deep-seated race hatred of Californians, their race riots and vigilantism.

The book paints an unpleasant picture of California's employer-employee relationship in agriculture for more than half a century. The strong land owners are usually well organized. The wandering workers are a pitiful lot dragging themselves and their families up and down the highways of the state. During most of the past half century they have been not only unorganized but ill fed, ill clothed and ill housed. In fact many of them have had no housing at all.

A few years ago the Communist Party tried to organize these unfortunate people in various sections of the state. Many strikes occurred but the movement was soon crushed. The AFL has organized some of the workers in canneries and packing houses. The latest group to appear on the scene are the CIO organizers, who are trying to get the field, shed and cannery workers into one industrial union. They are making some progress.

In the last analysis unionization will not solve these huge problems, although it is a step in the right direction and ought to mitigate or eliminate the more savage abuses which now prevail and the more unspeakable conditions which these labor slaves and their families now endure.

The author recommends, as partial solutions, organization, migratory camps decently operated and subsistence homesteads. His real solution is "the substitution of collective agriculture for the present monopolistically owned and controlled system." We cannot accept that solution if the author means collectivization in the communist way.

Rejecting the communist program does not solve the problem. Some way must be found, through public or private assistance, or both, to take human beings off the highways and put them on land which they can call their own.

✠ ROBERT E. LUCEY.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

War in Our Time, by the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research; edited by Hans Speier and Alfred Kahler. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.00.

THIS LARGE VOLUME attempts to analyze the probable character and the social and economic effects of war waged under modern conditions. A co-operative enterprise of members of the "University in Exile," the book comprises seventeen essays on such aspects of war as the need for sources of new materials, autarchy, war finance and the challenge of war to the Christian churches. If there be any one theme, it is that any contemporary or future war must be total, in that it will require the maximum effort of whole populations, and dynamic in that its inception and course will rest upon politics of power, very often unpredictable, very often not supported by economic theory or fact.

The contributing writers are opposed generally to power politics, in particular to the dynamic policies of the "axis" powers and the consequent preparation for war by other countries. In separate studies of such factors as capital, labor, foodstuffs, propaganda, etc., they come to the common conclusion that resort to war today can have only two major results: a large reduction in the material standard of living for the average man and an inevitable expansion of the powers of public authority, to the point of the possible extinction of popular self-government. They deplore the close contemporary tie between improved national prosperity and rearmament, but find no countervailing activity of peace equally effective in the national economy. Several chapters show how a modern war would accelerate both in area and in degree the growth of totalitarian states. Particularly interesting in this respect are the chapters on sovereignty, on the treatment of enemy property in modern war, and on labor in wartime. The book may thus be said to have a second theme, which may be first in the minds of its authors—opposition to dictatorships, and opposition to fascism in all its forms. The final chapter brings this thesis into the open.

Thorough and timely as the work may be, it lacks integration. In some ways this lack is due to simple matters of construction, such as the overlapping of subjects, and the absence of an index. Its style is academic in the manner of German scholarship; its words are too often polysyllabic, its phrases involved; its ideas must be dug out of their context. Primarily, however, integration is lacking because the authors have no finished conclusions. They offer partial remedies in separate chapters, remedies such as freer trade, less nationalistic control of currency, world economy; but they make no effort to integrate their conclusions. Several of them mention the

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desirability of establishing world-wide standards of production and consumption without seeming to realize that this process has begun in small degree. The contributors disagree on Russia and on the Catholic Church. They avoid the current misrepresentation of Russia as a democracy, and they admit that its methods and structure were imitated by the fascist authorities; in spite of these considerations, they quite generally leave the dynamics of Communism out of the discussion, and one of them credits fascism only with the introduction of fantastic lying into modern diplomacy. One of them says that the Communist International was created not for political conquest, but for preventing the aggression of capitalist states, and omits any possible inference of its aggressively furthering world revolution. On the moral side, the authors generally accept the concept of the personal dignity of man, and a few of them perceive that this concept rests historically on religious foundations, that the Catholic Church has served in maintaining an ideal of universal humanity; but they stop there. The author of the chapter on the Christian churches makes regrettable errors of logic. He says that according to Christian doctrine, war *as such* is sin, but *not always* sin; he confuses sin with behavior, without reference to the necessary qualities of knowledge and consent, and confuses *de fide* doctrine with philosophy. He also confuses individual Catholics with the Church and assumes that on the rightness of war all Catholics will be agreed. He tries to apply the definition of "just war" to our times, with the surprising conclusion that only if war were to be waged by international authorities yet to be established would it be theologically "just." He prefers the "genuine" pacifism of the "radical or liberal Protestants" who look on the world as doomed and who adopt an attitude of negation toward war, to the "realistic" pacifism of Catholics, and the "political" pacifism of "conservative Protestants." Conditions condemned as unjust are apparently to be endured without resistance, or by a reserve or flight of the mind, in the name of personal dignity, but there is no promise and no light as to how and when they will end. This is yearning after ideals believed lost, without the will to trace them to their springs and to restore them—the counsel of bitter disillusionment.

ELIZABETH M. LYNSKEY.

The First Negro Medical Society, by W. Montague Cobb. Washington, D. C.: The Associated Publishers. $2.15.

NEGRO PHYSICIANS who applied for membership in the Medical Society of Washington in 1869 were refused, even though the great abolitionist Charles Sumner carried the fight to the United States Senate and sought to have the charter of the Society revoked. But there were—and still are—more people on the side of race segregation, than against it. Repeated attempts to acquaint the American Medical Association with the humanitarian side of the question interest only the enlightened minority of white physicians; and the segregation of Negro medicine goes on.

Thus in 1884 the black physicians in Washington set up, with their white friends, the "Medico-Chirurgical Society." It reflects both the strivings of the Negro minority against mass ignorance and financial limitations and the economic competition between white and black physicians over the right to serve black patients. Dr. Cobb has uncovered some fine source material that every person seriously interested in the development of democracy ought to study with sympathy and renewed zeal. G. S.

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Diplomacy, by Harold Nicolson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

THIS monograph, as the author modestly calls it, is a work of first rate quality. Mr. Nicolson has lived most of his life in close connection with diplomatic circles, as he was born in Persia where his father was Chargé d'affaires, educated at Balliol College, Oxford, that has trained so many statesmen and diplomats, and since 1909 has served in the Foreign Office, in Parliament, and as a writer on diplomatic history. So in this little volume he speaks with no uncertain voice. It is of value to every reader interested in international affairs, and it will prove indispensable to all students who hope for a career in the foreign service.

The contents of the book are indicated by the chapters and an analysis of each section precedes its treatment. Briefly, the plan is the historical development of diplomacy, a study of the ideal diplomatist, and of types of European diplomacy today, recent changes in practice, points of procedure, and a concluding chapter on diplomatic language.

The style of the writer is excellent. There is a clarity and finish about his English, an urbanity and restrained wit in his judgments that make the reading of his book a distinct pleasure. There are two special advantages to be derived from a careful study, the first is that it gives an accurate knowledge of "the management of international affairs by negotiation" which will make possible a far more intelligent reading of the daily news; the second lies in the banishing from the mind of cheap cynicisms such as Wotton's famous apophthegm that "an ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country" and a realization of the value and the dignity of diplomacy, and the necessity of the seven diplomatic virtues of truth, precision, calm, good temper, patience, modesty, loyalty.

A brilliant book which is at the same time sincere, wise, and well-informed.

MOTHER MARY LAWRENCE, S.H.C.J.

FICTION

Sardinian Brigade, by Emilio Lussu. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

ALTHOUGH published as a novel, this book is frankly autobiographical. With Hervey Allen's "Toward the Flame" it is probably the best war biography yet to be published. There are no flags, no music, no glamor. This book deals with what happens after the flags, the music and the glamor. It is perhaps the most unpretentious of all the war books and this very lack of pretention is the largest factor in the impression of quiet insanity and horror that the book leaves in the reader, not definitely but as an overtone somehow appealing to the mind rather than the emotions.

He has drawn on his memory and not on his imagination, Lussu tells us in a preface and the reading of the book bears him out. The stamp of authenticity is on every page. If Lussu had had some axe to grind, whether political or religious, if he had even once become emotional, one might not so readily believe in the insane generals, in the almost universally drunken officers. But Lussu has no cause, is not even very much interested in writing as such.

From "Toward the Flame" one got the impression of the pervading litter, dirt and confusion of war. From this one the principal impression is one of whole drunken armies engaged in cold-blooded battle. The men know when an attack is coming by the increased brandy rations. Always the officers with very few exceptions are steeped in brandy. If there was no brandy, there would be no war. This is not ridiculous, but the certain fact that one takes from the book.

But the Italians were and are notoriously bad soldiers, you say; they needed the brandy? All right. The high point in the book in intellectual horror comes when the Italians, steeped in brandy, are awaiting the attack from the Austrians. As the Austrians sweep across No-man's Land, the wind is behind the attackers. What is the smell that rides on this wind from the brave attackers coming after the cowardly Italians. The smell is brandy, so strong as to be almost sickening.

There are mutinies, insane orders from insane generals, talk of shooting officers, the shooting of one or two officers by their own men. Everyone except the generals have forgot what they were fighting for—Democracy, etc., remember?—and the Generals, at least in this particular sector, are either insane or close to it.

Lussu is no cry-baby like Remarque. He is a very brave man, as his list of decorations testifies. He has no message, unless it be that the average man must be drunk in order to engage in modern warfare. He points no moral; is, indeed, just a little weary as he writes. If the fact that one has to be drunk to fight in this manner means nothing to you, well, that is too bad. Someone ought to send Vincent Sheean a copy.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

POETRY

Selected Poems, by Sister M. Madeleva. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.60.

EXCEPT for students bent upon appraisal, it is a very open question whether the small book of *selected* poems is not nearly always more valuable than the inclusive book of *collected*. In the first place, it represents the poet's self-criticism—the fastidiousness of the second and third thought. Then, from a practical point of view, it fits companionably—like the ubiquitous anthology—into the restricted space in which we moderns must live and move and do our reading.

So the value of these hundred or more pages from the greatest of our nun poets and one of the most luminous of our contemporary American poets is out of all proportion to their bulk. They will bring to a poetry lover not only sheer delight but possibly also surprise at the range of Sister Madeleva's creative gift. For here are devotional poems all the way from the radiant lyric of the "Happy Christmas Wind" to the quaintly fanciful "Young Girl Writeth to Her Father" or the white flame of "Communion." Here are verses sounding the traditional Bride of Christ motif—"Limitations," "Mary of Magdala," "A Question of Lovers," but always with a turn of freshness. And here are other poems compassing the entire human personality as reflected in the poet's deep dreams: poems of clean and candid human passion and symbolic sketches such as "Rahab" or "Penelope," often of a daring and delightful originality.

Sister Madeleva's fellowship with the beauty of the world is as likely to flame up in praise of the cactus flower or the tall trees of Wisconsin as in wistful memories of the "bar of sunset" or the first star over Bethlehem. Her mastery of the much abused sonnet is shown in a variety which includes the beautiful "October Birthday" and that

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joint praise of Sister Body and Sister Death uniquely called "My Best Dress." Her book is a difficult one to quote from; but perhaps its characteristic marriage of the personal and the universal is nowhere more striking than in such a poem as "Of Dust":

I said to my body, "Be mindful, thou art an offender,
Thou art dust of the dust, thou art slime, thou art clod of the clod."
But my body made answer, "O soul, I am blind with the splendor
Of the promise of God."

. . . . . .

"And this clay will pass from me and life, aye, and death, like a vapor;
I shall rise at His word, light as light, quick as thought, swift as wing;
For though dust, soul of mine, even dust at the hands of its shaper
Is a glorified thing."

KATHERINE BRÉGY.

The New Road and Other Poems, by Geoffrey Johnson. London: Williams and Norgate. 2/6.

READERS of THE COMMONWEAL will recall Mr. Johnson's name as that of a contributor of poetry to its pages. It is a pleasure for us to welcome this new collection of his poems.

There is nothing ultra-conservative about Mr. Johnson's technique; he has learned from the experimentalists and makes use of what they can give him in the way of rhythmic variation, but his real strength lies in his ability to use striking and well-chosen epithets that fit perfectly within the larger structure of his entire poem. These epithets only rarely give the impression of decoration, so aptly do they spring out of the very matter of each poem. When Mr. Johnson is whimsical, as in "The Pipers" and "Kitty," I do not like him; but in poems such as "Furnace Wharf," "The Milky Way," a superb thing, and "It May Be," poems full of controlled power, I like him very well.

The outstanding character of Mr. Johnson's work is an honest, instructed and intelligent optimism, Wordsworthian in the best sense, and eminently sane. The note of hysteria, found all too often in contemporary verse and mistakenly hailed as the true *furor poeticus*, appears nowhere in this small book; rather do we find that subtle but unmistakable quality best described as the great accent. I should not like to be forced to define this quality, but it can be described. It does not subsist in words or phrase-making, but in the author's choice of subjects, in his approach to them and his full understanding of what he proposes to do in any given poem. A clear, compelling sureness. Many poets and critics, mistaking the form of romanticism for the substance, think of poetry as of so many brilliant flashes of thought and expression, loosely gathered into a typographical unit. They omit to consider the very essential unity that a poem must have in itself, a unity that the poets of the classical tradition never forgot, whatever may have been their artistic sins in other departments. For that matter, the best of romantic poetry has this same unity. Without the great accent, which is a matter of endowment, discipline and the favor of heaven, you may have exceedingly competent and clever verses, but the true essence of poetry will be missing. I believe that Mr. Johnson's work has this quality and promises well for the future.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

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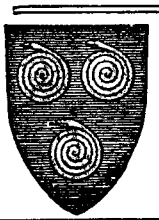

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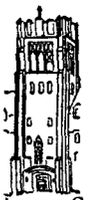

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The Inner Forum

THE IKON of Our Lady of Vladimir, known to the Russians as "Our Lady of Tenderness," is credited with having existed as long as Christianity itself, according to an article in a recent *Eastern Churches Quarterly*. Upon its being painted by Saint Luke it was presented to Mary the Mother of Jesus, who is alleged to have exclaimed, "Behold from henceforth all nations shall call me Blessed. . . . The grace of Him Whom I have borne and my grace will abide with this ikon."

In the fifth century the ikon was taken from Jerusalem to Constantinople, and in 1140 A.D. was brought to Kiev of Prince Dolguruky and his son enshrined it in a church near Vladimir. The proximity of the church to Vladimir caused the ikon to be called the Vladimir Virgin. "Her fame spread far and wide," continues the article, "and her picture was coveted by many princes." She participated in many battle and many victories were accredited to her. In 1237 the Tatars captured Vladimir. The ikon miraculously survived.

When, in 1395, Tamerlane swept over Russia with his hordes, Basil, Prince of Moscow appealed to Vladimir for the aid of the Virgin. While the ikon of the Virgin was being carried in a procession in Moscow, amidst the weeping and lamentation of the populace, Tamerlane was "dozing in his tent and was startled by a vision of a high mountain moving towards him, from which descended a company of saints with golden crosiers. Over them hovered a women surrounded by hosts of warriors. . . . Tamerlane, in fright, called his wise men and asked them what the vision meant. 'This woman of heavenly splendor whom you have seen is the Mother of God, the protector of Christians, therefore we shall not vanquish them,' replied his councilors. Tamerlane ordered a retreat, and, concludes the chronicler, 'For the sake of the virtuous Prince, God honored and spared the Russian land from Godless Tamerlane by the coming of the miraculous image of Christ's pure mother, painted by his own divine spokesman, Luke.'"

The Vladimir Madonna was taken out of her shrine in the Cathedral of the Assumption by the Bolsheviks in 1934 and is now on exhibition in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.

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